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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002685

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/FARAH - DIAG PHASE 1, MILESTONE OR MILLSTONE?

Classified By: A/POL COUNSELOR MARY TOWNSWICK FOR REASONS  
1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary: Phase I Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) commenced May 21 in Farah, with great official fanfare. Although the televised event was high on GOA and ISAF voltage, a last minute change of IAG lists by the Herat DIAG Committee led to participation of only two of nineteen IAG leaders. Governor Wasifi was also distracted by protests over his exclusion from a presidential visit to Tehran, which took focus away from DIAG. Ultimately, Farah lacks resources to back up program enforcement, so the program remains impotent. However, Farah is not willing to surrender, and has already reengaged IAG leaders. Farah's officials understand without security, economic and social development is impossible. End summary.

12. (C) Farah celebrated the inauguration of Phase I of the DIAG process May 21 with a televised event hosted by Governor Wasifi and attended by Kabul Deputy Ministers of Interior, Defense, and Rural Rehabilitation and Development and a ranking member of the National Directorate of Security (NDS). The event was highlighted by participation of ISAF Deputy Commander for Stability MG Gay and Japanese Ambassador Norihiro Okuda. Although 19 IAF commanders were invited, only two were present to receive letters requesting them to turn in their weapons.

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The Name Game  
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13. (C) The lack of IAG participation may have been in part due to poor communications of ISAF's intent to hold a shura. Another dilemma was a last minute change of names on the IAG list. Prior to the ceremony, the provincially vetted list was sent to the DIAG Directorate Regional Coordination center in Herat. Inexplicably, many of the names were deleted or changed. Of the names on the list, several are already incarcerated or live in different countries. Provincial Council member Zia Uddin was furious in his inclusion as he formalized his non-involvement before running for political office. Ironically, moments before he was handed the letter, he gave a vehement pro-DIAG speech. Another on the list reportedly told friends he had nothing to do with illegal

organizations and went into hiding, afraid that, "people are trying to put him in jail."

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Other Provincial Politics Steal Focus  
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¶4. (C) Timing of the ceremony also was unfortunate, as the previous day, President Karzai announced a trip to Tehran with the governors of Farah's neighboring provinces, but excluded Governor Wasifi. The slight was seen as a blow to Farah's economic and construction opportunities with Iran and resulted in a heated demonstration of merchants and educators. Wasifi used the media event to vent on the subject and announce his intent to meet with President Karzai. While this incident took the focus off of DIAG, it likely averted further provincial unrest.

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Since the Kickoff  
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¶5. (C) Farah's DIAG program immediately reengaged. To cap off a week-long visit by DIAG Southern Regional Manager Sher Jan Mayar, DIAG hosted a luncheon for the entire list of 162 provincial IAG leaders on June 3. Almost 140 attended and listened to speeches by Governor Wasifi, Provincial Council members, the Chief of Police, and the NDS Chief. IAG leaders appeared willing to listen and re-engage. Farah's DIAG steering committee restated its commitment to the program and discussed new strategies and messages. While Mayar privately pronounced DIAG "dead" in Farah, Farah's officials are not willing to capitulate, as they recognize prosperity is only

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obtainable with security.

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A Milestone or a Millstone?  
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¶6. (C) PRTOff Comment: DIAG Phase I failed to impress as a milestone for Farah's positive future. Continuous, face-to-face negotiations last year yielded minimal results and the distribution of letters did not appear to demonstrate strength or advancement in tactics, but rather a threat of action Farah cannot enforce. Lack of ANP manpower, equipment, and training, with no plans for augmentation until October 2008, underscore the central government's lack of ability to effectively implement DIAG and more generally its inability to provide needed assistance to the province. Even calls for uniforms and identification cards have gone unheeded. ANA in Farah has been reduced from six Kandaks to one. They remain inexperienced in the type of operations required if DIAG enforcement is necessary. Joint operations with the ANP beyond mere foot patrols are as yet nonexistent.

Despite these challenges, Farah's officials, with help from PRTOffs, plan to develop new DIAG tactics, emphasizing with the message that, without better security, economic and social development is impossible. DIAG remains an important, though currently unachievable, step towards this security. End comment.

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